

Ἡ Λογικὴ Λατρεία.

OR A
S E R M O N
P R O V I N G

That REASON is to be our Guide
in the Choice of our Religion;

A N D

That nothing ought to be admitted as an
Article of Faith, which is Repugnant to the
Common Principles of REASON, or is Unin-
telligible to Human Understanding.

Quaestio. Τί εἶναι ἡ Λογικὴ Λατρεία;

Responsio. Ὁ μὲν ὡς ἀν' ἀγνῆται ἀπαρτίζονται, ἄλλοθεν λατρεύει λα-
τρείαν. Ὁ δὲ μετὰ λόγου ὑγιᾶς καὶ βελίης ἀγαθῆς σὺν πολλῇ φρον-
ήσει τὰ πρὸ Θεοῦ πάντοτε καὶ πανταχῶς δοκῶντα σκοτῶμεν καὶ κατε-
ρῶν, οὐδ' ἔτι πλεονεξίαν ἐνβολὴν τῆς Λογικῆς Λατρείας, καὶ τὸν
ἐκείνου. Λύχνη πῶς ποσὶ μὲν ὁ νόμος, καὶ πῶς ταῖς τεύξεσιν μὲν.
Basil. To. 2. Resp. ad Regul. Brev. 230. P. 703.

Samuel L O N D O N Whitty DD

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T H E P R E F A C E.

THE Atheists, who deny the Being of such a God as inspects all our Actions in order to a future Recompence ; and the Infidels, who reject all Divine Revelations, are generally represented as the most absurd and foolish Part of Mankind : But how true soever this may be, yet I much fear, that whilst such Doctrines are embraced, and owned as Doctrines necessary to Salvation, which plainly seem to contradict the common Notions of Mankind, and the plain Principles of Natural Reason God hath implanted in them, we never shall be able to convince them of the Unreasonableness of their Infidelity. For when this is once granted, that some Doctrines contained in the Christian Revelation, and by it owned as necessary to Salvation, seem plainly to contradict the Common Reason of Mankind ; all you can, after this Confession, say unto them, can never move them from their Sentiments. For sure it will be found a vain

Attempt to persuade Men to acknowledge that a Righteous God engageth all Men, on pain of his Eternal Wrath, to believe with their Understandings, what they cannot understand; or to assent to that as a most certain Truth, which, by all the Reason God hath given them whereby to judge of Truth, appears to be the plainest Contradiction, and therefore cannot possibly be true.

And if that which I have endeavoured to establish in this Sermon be a certain Truth, the plain Inference from it will be this, That all Doctrines, contrary to those Natural Notions which God hath put into the Breasts of all Mankind, ought to be rejected, what Authority soever may be pleaded for them. yea, tho' they pretend to be countenanced from some Texts and Expressions of the Holy Scripture, or carry the Venerable Name of Catholick Traditions; because the Evidence we either have, or can have, of any Divine Revelation, or Presumed Tradition, being founded upon some common and avowed Principles of Reason, whatsoever is contrary to the Common Reason of Mankind, can never be owned as a Divine Revelation or Tradition: And whether that which doth pretend to be so, be indeed so or not, must be determined by those Natural Notions by which alone we can pass a Judgment of such things. And all pretence to prove such Doctrines from Holy Scripture, or Catholick Tradition, as evidently contradict those Natural Ideas God hath implanted in us, strike at the Divine Authority of those Books, and the Credit of those Traditions: For since they

Common

that a Common Notions are undoubtedly the most Ancient
 Primitive Traditions, and the most evident and cer-
 tain Revelations which God hath made unto Man-
 kind; and even such as do require no other De-
 monstration of their Truth, besides the Natural
 Dictates of every Man's Mind; hence is it certain,
 that no True Revelation, or Tradition, can contain
 any thing repugnant to them: So that no Man
 ought to suffer himself to be seduced into any such
 Opinions, upon presumption that there be such
 Scripture-Revelations, or Catholick Traditions,
 which seem to countenance them; for, if they really
 did so, the Consequence would not be the Confirm-
 ing such Opinions, but the Weakening the Authority
 of those pretended Revelations and Traditions; for
 just so many Arguments as any Man produceth from
 Scripture or Tradition for any such Opinions, so
 many Weapons He puts into the Hands of Infidels
 and Atheists against that Scripture and Tradi-
 tion.

In a word, the Speculative Infidel and Atheist
 owes his whole Strength unto our Weakness; and
 because we have too much Religion, He will have
 none at all. If then we would effectually put a
 Stop to the Growing Atheism and Infidelity of this
 Age, let us admit no Doctrines, as Parts of our Re-
 ligion, which evidently seem to contradict the Com-
 mon Principles of Reason. And having thus sub-
 verted the sole Foundation of Infidelity, it will, yea,
 it must sensibly decay: For as plain Reason, and
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the Common Notions of Mankind are things unalterable, and inflexible, and will maintain their Ground against Mystery and Enthusiasm, and at last prevail against them: So when any Sentiment, or Opinion, becomes destitute of any Reason to support it, it must fall, and be discarded, because we can have then no Reason to assent to it.





LUKE XII. 57.

*And why even of your own selves
judge ye not what is Right ?*

IT hath been of old, and is still, a very
common, but a very foolish Question,
Who shall judge in such, or such a Case ?
For if Men be concerned to judge at
they must do it by that Faculty which alone
given them to judge by ; that is, they must do
by that Reason by which alone they can discern
betwixt Truth and Falshood, Good and Evil, Just
and Unjust. For that we do discern betwixt these
things, is certain from Experience ; and that we
do this by the Exercise of our Reason, is as certain ;
Judgment must be either brutish, and irrational,
founded upon Reason ; Moreover, to judge is
to conclude that this, or that, is so, or not so.
Now all Conclusions are inferr'd from Premises ;
to infer one thing from another is to Reason ;
therefore nothing can be judge in any Case but
Reason.

Hence

Hence I infer, That in all Cases, in which we are obliged to pass a Judgment, we must, and can be only guided by our Reason. This Doctrine is here clearly delivered by our Lord, of whose Veracity we cannot reasonably doubt: For by enquiring *wherefore do ye not judge what is right?* He supposeth that we have sufficient Means to do so: It being Folly to ask why Men do not that which we know they have no sufficient Means to perform. And, by adding, *Why do you not this of your selves?* He doth as plainly teach us, that we have in and from our selves sufficient Means to judge what is right. Since then it hath been proved, that it is only by our Reason that we discern betwixt Truth and Falshood, Right and Wrong; it clearly follows, that in all Cases in which we are obliged to pass this Judgment, we must be guided by our Reason. And this Truth is evident to a Demonstration; for whatsoever I believe, or assent to, either I have reason to assent to it, or I have not. If I have not, then,

First, My Assent must be Irrational; for when I have no Reason to Assent, my Assent must be Irrational, or without Reason.

Secondly, It also must be uncertain and precarious; that is, it may be an Assent as well to Falshood as to Truth; since, if I have no Reason to believe it true, I can have no Certainty that it is not false; for the only Certainty I can have that any Doctrine I assent to is not false, is, because I have Evidence, or Rational Inducements to conceive

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true. If then whatsoever I believe or assent to, I therefore do believe, because my Reason judgeth it is true; then Reason is my Judge and Guide in all that I believe. To illustrate and confirm this by an Induction of Particulars.

1st, When the Question is, Whether any Religion at all should be embraced, or not? Reason alone must here be Umpire. For can any Man conceive he is not thus obliged, who indeed believes he hath just Reason to embrace some Natural or Revealed Religion? Can he put such a Force upon his Faculties, as to see Reason to assent to the Being of a Deity, and yet be a Speculative *Atheist*? Or to perceive sufficient Ground to pay some Homage to this Deity, and yet believe he owes him none? If not, it is evident that if there be any *Speculative Atheist*, or any Person who owns no Religion, he must be so, because he thinks he hath no Reason to believe there is a God, or that he owes him any Service. Again, Doth any wise Man attempt to bring such a Person off from his Infidelity, without offering him a Reason? And if, upon Examination of the Arguments suggested to him, he perceives them valid and convincing, can he persist in his Infidelity? If not, 'tis evident that a convincing Reason destroys both Infidelity and Irreligion, and that he only can be an *Infidel*, who sees no Reason to be otherwise. In a word, doth not both he who offers Reasons against *Atheism* and *Infidelity*; and he who does attempt to answer them, agree in this, that Reason only must be Judge in this Enquiry.

B

2dly,

2dly, If it be enquired, Whether an *Heathen* be obliged to believe or practise what we call *Natural Religion*; seeing he hath no other Light but that of Nature, or of Reason, to direct him in that Enquiry, that alone must be sufficient to enable him to judge what are the Duties which he owes to God, or else he cannot be at all obliged to perform them; seeing he hath no other Law but that of Nature, that is, no other Light but that of Reason to be guided by. The Reason therefore of this *Heathen* must be sufficient to convince him, *that there is a God, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* And this the *Apostle* plainly testifies by saying, *Heb. xi. 6. that without this Faith it is impossible to please God.*

3dly, If the Enquiry be, among the various Kinds of Religion which equally pretend to Divine Revelation, *Judaism, Christianity, and Mahometism*, Which is the true one, and therefore fit to be embraced? Must I not here examine all their Pretences to a Divine Original, by their Consonance to Truth, and to the Verdict of my Reason? And if, upon this Examination, I prefer that of *Christianity*, must not I do this, because my Reason doth conceive that the Arguments for the Truth of that Religion are most satisfactory to my Understanding, and such as afford so full an Evidence of Truth, as renders my Refusal to assent to them highly unreasonable? Hitherto then, as Reason is my only Guide, so is it also my only Rule: Nor can I have any other Rule whereby to guide it, but

but those avowed Principles and Reasons by which I have try'd the Truth of all other Rules. For seeing, in this Case, all Revelations, whether true or pretended, are the very things on which I pass my Judgment, I can have nothing else whereby to pass my Judgment on them, but my Reason: The Excellency of the Matter of the Revelation may be a Motive to believe it; but then it is the Inference my Reason makes from the Consideration of the Subject-Matter, which alone doth convince me of its Truth, and its Divine Original. And what else can we mean, by speaking of the *Reasonableness of the Christian Faith*? Is not this also taught by our Saviour in these Words, *Wherefore of your selves judge ye not what is right*? Is it not by his Inspired Apostles, by St. Paul in his Command to *try all things, and to hold fast that which is good*? By St. John, saying, *Try the Spirits whether they be of God, or not*? And by St. Peter, requiring *Christians to be ready to render a Reason of the Hope that is in them*? "If these Words, saith Mr. Chillingworth, do not advise *Christians* to make Use of their Reason in the Choice of their Religion, I must confess my self to understand nothing.

4thly, Having, by embracing *Christianity*, acquired a new Rule to judge by: If here the Question be, How I must judge of the true Sense and Meaning of this Rule? The Answer still must be the same, *viz.* I may, and must judge of it by my Reason, assisted by those Means by which I pass a Judgment of the Sense of any other Wri-

ting. I say, I may be still here guided by my Reason. For that which could bring me to my Rule of Faith, will much more guide me in it; especially when it delivers what is plain and easy to be understood, as that assuredly must be, which God requires me to believe or do, on Pain of his severe Displeasure. For, as the Judicious Mr. *Chillingworth* strongly argues, “If God would have had his Meaning, in obscure Places, certainly known, How could it stand with his Wisdom to be so wanting, as to his Will and End, as to speak obscurely? Or how can it consist with his Justice, to require Men to know certainly, what He hath not certainly revealed. If ^{1 Cor. 14.} ^{8, 9, 11.} *the Trumpet giveth an uncertain Sound, saith St. Paul, who shall prepare himself for the Battel? So if ye utter not εὐκτατον λόγον, clear and certain Speech, who shall know what is spoken? For, by speaking they know not what, you shall speak into the Air, that is, Words as vain and unprofitable, as if they were spoken where none heard them. Therefore if I know not the Meaning of the Voice, I shall be to him that speaketh to me thus unintelligibly, as a Barbarian, or one who knows not what he says; and he that speaketh will be as a Barbarian, or Speaker in an unknown Language, to me. Now, after these Expressions for the Reproof of the Corinthians using the Gift of Languages in their Assemblies so unprofitably, as that the Hearers were not edified by it, Can it be reasonable to conceive, that both our Lord him-
self,*

self; and all that from him received a Commission to preach all things which he had said unto them, and even St. Paul himself, should be guilty of the same Crime, for which he had reprov'd the *Corinthians*? That is, that they, in all their Writings delivered to the *Christians*, as the Rule of Faith, should speak into the Air, so as not to profit, because their Trumpet gave an uncertain Sound; and should be as *Barbarians* to them that read them: That they, in their Discourses written for our Learning, should neglect to speak things easy to be understood, when the End of speaking is to be understood; and the worst Imputation you can cast upon a Writer, is, that he writeth unintelligibly. And yet, if what these Teachers of the Church delivered in their Writings indited by the Holy Ghost, concerning Matters necessary to be believed and done in order to Salvation, were not delivered with sufficient Clearness, both they, and that good Spirit by whom they spake and wrote these things, may justly be accused of those very Crimes, which the Apostle so smartly doth reprove in others.

I say therefore, that Reason must be still our Guide in the Interpretation of the Sense of Scripture. I know the Romanists do say, in Contradiction to this Proposition, that what doth seem absurd and contradictory to our Reason, may notwithstanding be a Divine Revelation; and that the seeming Contradictions and Absurdities of any Doctrine are not to be regarded, where Divine Revelation is produced

R. H. Ch. 6.
§. 62. p. 61,
63.

red to confirm any Doctrine. But this Assertion, in the plain Result, and necessary Consequences of it, is down-right *Atheism*, and *Infidelity*; it destroys *Christianity*; it renders it a vain, fruitless Thing, to go about to perswade a *Jew*, *Mahometan*, or *Heathen* to desert his Religion; it renders all Disputation useless, and all our Interpretations of the Holy Scripture vain, and groundless. And,

First, It either tends to make Men *Atheists*, or, at the least, to justify them in their *Infidelity*; for what can you object against any *Atheist*, or an *Infidel*, but some Absurdities, or Contradictions, which you charge upon his *Infidelity*? If then you own that seeming Contradictions, and Absurdities, may be revealed Truths, you also own that what you have reduced him to, as the most gross Absurdity that you can charge upon him, may be a certain Truth.

Secondly, This Assertion evidently destroys the Truth and Certainty of *Christian Faith*, because that is entirely founded upon rational Inducements, which if they may be false, *Christianity* may be a false Religion; if they be true, that which evidently contradicts them must be false; if therefore any Articles of *Christian Faith* should contradict those Principles of Reason, by doing so, they must shock the Foundations of that Faith, by engaging Men to believe that may be false, which alone induced them to believe the Truth of that Religion which contain'd that Article.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, This Assertion renders it a vain, and
 fruitless Thing, to endeavour to convert *Jews*,
Heathens, or *Mahometans*, to the *Christian Faith*,
 or to persuade them to desert their own Profession;
 for be it, say they, that your Reasons have con-
 vinced us of the Absurdity of the *Heathen* Worship,
 of the Abrogation of the *Jewish* Law, be it that
 the Religion taught by the Prophet *Mahomet* seems,
 in some Part of it, absurd and contradictory to hu-
 man Reason : Yet if you do not reject the Revela-
 tions of your own Prophet, the *Messias*, on ac-
 count of any seeming Contradictions, and Absurdi-
 ties, contained in his Doctrine, neither are we
 obliged to reject the Revelations of our Prophets,
 by reason of any seeming Contradictions, or Ab-
 surdities, you alledge against them. What Reason,
 say they, can you offer against our Religion, be-
 sides some seeming Contradictions contained in the
 Articles of our Faith ; and, if we shou'd turn *Chri-*
stians, you inform us that the Doctrine of the *Blessed*
Trinity, *Hypostatick Union*, and the Re-
urrection of the same Body, tho' they R. H. p 62.
 be obnoxious to the like Absurdities, must be
 believed by us ; is it not then irrational to desert
 our own Faith upon the Appearance of some
 Absurdities, and Contradictions, you object a-
 gainst it, to embrace that, which, by your
 own Confession, is encumber'd with the like Ab-
 surdities ? If we must have a Faith which is ob-
 noxious to Absurdities and Contradictions, by pro-
 posing Ours to be so, you have confirmed it to us,
 and

Thirdly,

and shew'd that we are *almost Christians*, that is absurd Renouncers of our Reason.

Fourthly, This Assertion renders all our Disputations against *Hereticks*, or other Persons, vain. For suppose I should assert with the *Tritheists*, that *there be Three Gods*, or that there be *Three Essences* or *Natures*, in the *Sacred Trinity*; why should this Faith be more absurd than that which saith *there be Three Persons, and One Essence*, if both be equally obnoxious to Contradictions? To what purpose are all Disputes betwixt *Protestants* and *Papists*, *Calvinists*, and *Remonstrants*, or any other Sects, if Reason ought not to prevail on either Hand; and these Disputes cannot successfully be managed, by shewing the Absurdities and Contradictions of One of these Opinions to the plain Principles of Human Reason, or the seeming Opposition which they bear to some clear Passages of *Holy Scripture*? If it be sufficient to reply to all the Absurdities and Contradictions we can charge upon their Opinions, as doth the *Romanist* to the manifold Contradictions alledg'd against the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, that they have *learnt not to Answer such Arguments* (which it is hard to do) *but to despise them*, (which is very easy,) then since all other Cases, in which the Revelation is pretended, are of the same Nature, it must be vain to offer any Arguments to confute the most impudent Pretender to a Revelation, since, by this Doctrine, a *Divine Revelation may be subject to manifold Absurdities and Contradictions*.

Fifthly

Fifthly, This Doctrine renders all our Interpretations of Holy Scripture groundless ; for how can it be known , provided you admit this Principle, what Sense of Scripture is repugnant to the Mind of God ? For Instance, how shall I be assured that I am not obliged literally to *pluck out my Right Eye, and cut off my Right Hand*, when they cause me to offend ? And really to *bate Father and Mother, Wife and Children, yea, and my own Life for the sake of Christ* ? Do not all wise Men conclude, that these and such like Sayings must not be taken literally, because, they, being so interpreted, would be absurd, and contradictory Precepts to the Principles of Reason, of natural Affection, and of self Preservation ? If then these be sufficient Reasons to reject the literal Meaning of these Words, the like Absurdities and Contradictions must be sufficient to cause us to reject any other Interpretations clog'd with the like Absurdities: If they be not sufficient for this End, Why may it not be held that *Christians* are obliged to comply with the literal Meaning of the Words now recited, and others like unto them, and actually to *pluck out their offending Eyes, and cut off their offending Hands* ? St. *Austin* propounds this Rule for the Interpretation of these, and such like Places, *That if the Words of Scripture seem to forbid what is Good, or to command what is Evil, they must be taken figuratively.* For Instance, saith he, ' Our Saviour saith, *Except you eat the Flesh, and drink the Blood of the Son of Man, you shall have no Life in you*: Which seeming to command something Evil, must figuratively be understood

De Doctrina
Christiana, l.
3. c. 16.

‘ of calling to mind, that his Flesh was crucified, and wounded for us’. But seeing to command what *seemeth to be Evil*, is only to command what seems absurd and contradictory to Reason, if that can be no Prejudice to a pretended Revelation, it cannot prejudice this Revelation, that *what seems Evil to us is indeed our Duty*; and so St. *Augustine’s* Rule must be False and Insignificant.

Again, It is evident, say Divines generally, that God is *Incorporeal*, and *without Parts*; and therefore that those *Scriptures* which attribute to him *Eyes and Ears, Hands and Feet, &c.* and say that *God made Man after his own Image and Similitude*, ought not to be interpreted literally. But why may we not conclude from these numerous Expressions of the *Scripture*, as did the *Audians*, and the *Anthropomorphites*, that *God is corporeal*? if that may be a Divine Revelation, which as plainly contradicts the Principles of Reason, and the common Notions which we have of other Things. Do not all Commentators on the *Scriptures*, Ancient and Modern, *Protestants* and *Papists*, confess that Sense of *Scripture* they reject, from the Absurdities and Contradictions they conceive will follow from it, that is, by Reason? Do they not endeavour to establish that Sense of *Scripture* they contend for, from those Reasons they alledge for the Truth of it? And do they not, by this, shew that they do all agree in this, that Reason must be the Judge of the true Sense of *Scripture*? In fine, they who endeavour to persuade us, that Holy *Scripture* may be best interpreted by *Tradition*, or by the *Church’s Voice*, or by the Sayings of the *Ancients*

cient Fathers, either they do this, without Reason, as I verily believe they do, and then there is no Reason we should hearken to them; or else they do produce sufficient Reasons so to do, and by so doing shew, that Reason doth induce them so to judge of the true Sense of *Scripture*; which was the Proposition to be proved.

And whereas, against this Assertion, it is objected that Reason is fallible, and therefore may misguide or deceive us.

First, To this I might answer, by denying that Reason can misguide, or deceive me; for as long as I follow Reason's true Rules I cannot err, because they are certain and invariable; and it is only by swerving from them thro' Ignorance, Prejudice, Passion, or bending to my Interest, that I mistake; and when she finds that I do this through Ignorance, and Passion, she calls me Fool; when I do it in Compliance with my Interest, she calls me Knave; when out of Prejudice, she doth pronounce me blind. And what Rule soever you substitute in lieu of Reason, we must either follow it blindly, that is, unreasonably; or by this fallible Reason must conclude it dictates this or that.

Secondly, This Plea, if it be valid, will force us to renounce our Reason, and turn *Scepticks*; since whatsoever Rule we, by this fallible Reason, are induc'd to follow, we must be subject to the like Mistakes. For instance; Divine Revelations are infallible: But are we not subject, in obscure Places, to mistake the Meaning of them? Do not *Protestants*, as well as *Papists*, plead, for Confirmation of their Faith, Agreement with the Sentiments

and the Traditions of the *Primitive Church*, and the *Decrees of Councils*? And must not one of them mistake in doing so? Do not the Doctors of the Church of *Rome* differ exceedingly, in telling us when the *Church Catholick* speaks, and what is the true Meaning of her Words?

Thirdly, If my Reason, being fallible, may misguide me, Why may it not do so, when it conducts me to the *Church*; since it is only upon prudential Motives, that *Romanists*, or others, do persuade me to receive her Dictates? And if I may not trust my Reason in other Cases, why should I do it in this? If my Confidence of the *Church's Infallibility* be built upon my Reason, and I have no Certainty of it, but from my Reason; then can I have no more Assurance of the Church's Guidance, than I have of the Conduct of my Reason: For the Superstructure cannot be stronger than the Foundation of it is. If then my Reason be too weak to trust to, that which is built upon it must be so.

Lastly, This Argument against Reason strikes at the Truth of all Religion: It being evident from what hath been discoursed, that I have not any but this fallible Reason to induce me to believe that there is a God by whom all Things were made, a Providence by which they are all governed and directed; or that any Religion, either Natural, or Reveal'd, is to be embrac'd. In a word, the Certainty of our whole Faith depending upon that of Reason, it must fall together with it. So that to quarrel with the Use of Reason, upon this Account, is, in effect, to quarrel with Religion, and *Christianity*. Now the Natural Consequences of this Discourse are these.

1st. Hence it must follow, that I cannot believe that is an Article of Faith, which contains in it a Real Contradiction : Because a Contradiction, being the Affirmation and Negation of the same Thing, in the same Respect, of the same Subject ; I cannot believe that God hath said, and yet hath not said, any thing of the same Subject, in the same Respect.

Add to this, that as to my Assent, or Dissent, it is the same thing to be, and to seem to my Mind to be a Contradiction : For what seems to me to be a Contradiction, whilst it continues so to do, can no more be believ'd by me, than a Real Contradiction : Because I can have no greater Reason to assent to it, than to dissent from it ; since all the Reason that can induce me to assent to it can be only this ; That by not Assenting to it, I shall seem to contradict some Principle of Reason on which that Article is founded : And if I do assent to that, which to my Reason seems to be a Contradiction, it is evident that I do the same thing ; since that alone can seem to me a Contradiction, which seems repugnant to some Principle of Reason. If then I cannot give a Rational Assent to that, which I have equal Reason to dissent from, 'tis evident, that I can have no Reason to assent to that, which seems to me a Contradiction. Besides, there is no such thing as a Real Contradiction, in Opposition to a Mental one ; for Affirmation and Negation are Actions of the Mind. Since then a Contradiction is the Affirmation and Negation of the same Thing, &c. it can be only in the Mind ; and so what seems unto my Mind to be the

the Affirmation and Negation of the same Thing, in the same Respect, of the same Subject, is to me as much a Contradiction as any Thing can be. To distinguish therefore betwixt a real and seeming Contradiction in Articles of Faith is a vain Thing. An apparent Contradiction being the same Thing to him to whom it so appears, as a real one; and he that doth maintain the grossest Contradictions may as securely fly to this Refuge, *viz.* That *his Assertion seems indeed, to the Eye of Reason, to be a Contradiction, but really is not so,* as any other Person.

2dly, Hence also it is certain, that no Man doth, or can believe what he doth not, or cannot understand; for then he must believe he knows not what; and so, without Ground, Reason, and Understanding. And you may as reasonably require a Man to believe what you speak to him in an unknown Language, as in Words that he cannot Understand. Moreover, to Believe is to Assent to a Testimony as true; now Assent is the Action of the Mind, and of the Understanding; and it is that alone which passeth Judgment of the Truth or Falshood of a Proposition, and this it doth only upon Evidence, and that is only in the Mind. In fine, either I Believe with my Understanding, or with my Will; if with my Will, then as I can Will what I please, so may I Believe what I please, even the plainest Contradictions: If with my Understanding, then I can no more Believe what I cannot Understand, then I can Understand what I cannot Understand.

I grant, what an Ingenious Person says, that *God may certainly know what I do not, or cannot*

Understand ; but then I add, that he cannot have revealed to me what I cannot *Understand* ; and so he cannot have required me to assent to it as an *Article of Faith*, or of Revealed Religion : He doubtless knows how he is Omniscient, and Omnipresent, and how he will raise the Dead with the same Body ; but he hath not enabled me to understand how he is Omnipresent, or Omniscient, or how he will raise the same Body ; and therefore I am only obliged to believe that he is Omniscient, Omnipresent, and will raise the Dead, which Things he plainly hath revealed to my Understanding, but cannot be obliged to believe how he is Omniscient, Omnipresent, or how he will raise up the Same Body, because he hath not revealed to me the Manner how ; so that where my Understanding fails, and my Knowledge is non-plus'd, my Faith is not required. And thus it is also in reference to our Knowledge of Things natural ; for Instance, that my Soul is united to my Body, and that it Acts on every moveable Part of it, I know by Experience ; but how it is United to it, or how it Acts upon it, or whether it be Coexistent with every Part on which it Acts, I neither do, nor can I be concern'd to know.

When therefore it is said that an *Article of Faith* is above our Understanding, either the meaning is, That we cannot understand the Thing or Matter contained in that Article ; and then it is certain it is no Article of Faith, as being not revealed to our Understanding ; or else the meaning is only this, That we cannot discern the Manner how it is, what it is revealed to be ; and then the Manner how can be no Article of Faith, or Object of Belief, for the same Reason.

Again,

Again, When Men say such a Doctrine is a *Mystery*, if by that Word they, who thus speak, only intend to signify it is imperceptible, or inconceivable as to the Manner how it is, what it is said to be; this is only to tell me, that the Manner how can be no Object of my Faith: But if they intend to signify that the Doctrine, which is the Object of my Faith, is inconceivable, or what I cannot understand, they talk absurdly, and call me to believe I know not what; and to do this, I know not why; for I can pass no Judgment of the Truth or Falshood of that Thing which I cannot perceive, or understand.

Lastly, Hence also doth it follow, that it is the same Thing to say that such a Doctrine is inconceivable, and transcends Humane Understanding, and to say it is not Revealed: For if it be revealed to my Understanding, it must be intelligible to the same Understanding, and so my Understanding must be able to conceive what is is, and to pass a Judgment on it.

Good therefore is the Advice of the Wise Son of Syrach, Ecclus. 3. 21, 22, 25. *Search not into the things which are above thy strength, and look not out the things which are too hard for thee, but what is commanded thee, think thou upon with Reverence: For it is not needful for thee to see with thine Eyes the things that are secret; without Eyes thou shalt want light; profess not the Knowledge therefore which thou hast not.* This I do very believe, that tho' Men may, and do so, God can no more require us to believe what we cannot understand, than to do what we cannot do. May we all be so wise as to know, and do the Things which belong to our Eternal Peace, and then we shall be Wise enough, being Wise to Salvation.

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